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The Hindu Attitude to Christian  
Evangelism and Humanitarian  
Work

The Secular State

Christian Responsibility in Indian  
Society

The Rule of Law

Book Reviews

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# The Hindu Attitude

to

## Christian Evangelism and Humanitarian Work

V. E. DEVADUTT

We have been told recently by some spokesmen on behalf of the Government of India that foreign missionaries should confine themselves in this land to doing humanitarian works, eschewing all motive of converting Indians to the Christian Faith. Though it is foreign missionaries that are sought to be singled out at present, such a policy if allowed to go unchallenged is likely to be extended eventually to cover the missionary activities of the Indian Church and the indigenous Christians. The reason for such a fear is obvious. The alleged policy of the Government (we are using the word 'alleged' deliberately, for we are not yet certain to what extent the Government is actually committed to the statements made in Parliament by the Home Minister) is based either on a principle or is purely discriminatory, seeking to single out foreign missionaries for the imposition of certain restrictions on their missionary activities for no reason but that they are foreigners. Such a discriminatory policy aimed at foreigners cannot be sustained by the Government without discrediting itself. One therefore is inclined to suspect that there is in the minds of some people who speak on behalf of the Government a principle—a principle arising out of their personal religious convictions but which they dare not apply to the activities of the indigenous Christians for fear of violating constitutional guarantees given to all religious communities in the State. This principle is that conversion from one religion to another is wrong. If the Government of India ever forgets that India is a Secular State, the principle may be sought to be applied to the activities of the indigenous Christians also. A Government that has a safe majority and a Parliament that comprises and that will always comprise a majority of people who believe in the principle that conversion from one religion to another is wrong, can always change the Constitution of the State. We fervently hope that India will honour its pledges to religious minorities and that its Government at no time will do anything to injure the secular character of the Indian State. If a Secular State is not entitled to legislate against the religious beliefs and practices of its citizens so long as such beliefs and practices are not contrary to morality, then the restriction sought to be placed on the evangelistic enterprise of foreign missionaries boils down to one of discrimination. The discrimination may be legally justified



but it will not bring credit to India and is contrary to her professed policy to fight against arbitrary discriminations wherever found in human society.

But the Christian should understand why the Hindu is against conversion from one religion to another as a matter of principle. The Indian Christian may take his stand on constitutional rights to propagate his faith; he might fight a legal battle against any governmental encroachment on the privilege of the Church to invite others not of Indian origin to share in the Church's evangelistic task; but he cannot fight a constitutional or legal battle against the belief that is tenaciously held by many Hindus that conversion is wrong. Here he is face to face with a religious philosophy that denies the validity of certain Christian claims. He must understand this religious philosophy and develop a Christian apologetic in relation to it. Our battle is not constitutional or legal but it is partly a battle to win and convert minds.

### **Hindu Religious Philosophy against Conversion**

The sum and substance of the Hindu religious philosophy directed against conversion may be stated as follows: Reality is one and undivided. This being so, we can never have any knowledge or experience of it. Why? Because knowledge and experience involve an antithesis between the subject and the object, between the knower and the known, between the one who experiences and the object experienced. An inevitable duality is involved both in knowledge and experience on the empirical level. Knowledge has always a reference to something beyond itself. But Reality is one and indivisible and when you move from the plane of plurality to the realm of Reality, all duality and all antithesis is abolished; as a matter of fact there is no place for any division and distinction. No subject-object relationship is possible accordingly, and therefore there is place for neither knowledge nor experience of Reality in the normal sense. Reality is beyond all intellectual categorization, for such categorization assumes relations and divisions. You know Reality by being it. Of course, in fact it is not knowledge but mystic intuition of identity where all movements of the intellect, will and emotion are transcended. What abides is a supra-personal existence in unity and identity.

If Reality is one, the world of plurality, that is to say the world of our normal experience, cannot be real. The One and the Many are irreconcilable. Nevertheless it should not be understood by this that the world of plurality is a mere projection of subjective ideas having no extra-mental reality. By calling it unreal what is meant to be understood is that in relation to transcendent truth it possesses no value. The realm of the Many is only provisionally or relatively real.

All our knowledge and experience has real relevance only to that which is comprehended in it, namely, the world of relations, the world of plurality. If this world of plurality though having a positive and concrete existence possesses no value in relation to transcendent truth, our knowledge and experience which pertain only to this world of plurality have also no real value in relation to transcendent truth. All the deliverances of our experience, both intellectual and otherwise, being



completely relative to that which is true only relatively, provisionally or pragmatically, never bear the stamp of ultimate truthfulness. Perhaps the right way is to treat all the judgments arising out of our experience in this world as being both true and false. Their truth consists in the first place in their pragmatic character, relative to a pragmatic world. In the second place, may not our world of relative reality express partially at least, the nature of ultimate truth, for in the end nothing can be looked upon as being outside Reality; everything must be within Reality even if only provisionally. If this be so, our judgments arising out of our experience of this world may express partially and symbolically the nature of ultimate truth. Nevertheless, they are also false in the sense that, the world of our experience having no real value in relation to transcendent truth, these judgments have no abiding value.

Since all that is said above pertains to religious experience also, all our religious affirmations are both true and false. They are all true, however divergent they may be from one another, in the same sense that intellectual judgments that pertain to the realm of the provisionally or pragmatically real are true. They are all false also, for no judgment or even a group or a system of judgments, religious or otherwise, can ever express the total or true nature of Reality. As a matter of fact Reality transcends all judgments—it is '*neti*', '*neti*'—'not this', 'not this'.

Mahatma Gandhi was not a philosopher but he thoroughly imbibed the spirit of this religious philosophy and gave a popular expression to it. He writes, 'Even as a tree has a single trunk, but many branches and leaves, so is there one true and perfect Religion, but it becomes many as it passes through the human medium. The one Religion is beyond all speech. Imperfect men put it into such language as they can command and their words are interpreted by other men equally imperfect. Whose interpretation is to be held the right one? Everybody is right from his own standpoint but it is not impossible that everybody is wrong.'<sup>1</sup> If this is the nature of religion *qua* religion, to assess the merits of various religions is futile and any attempt to convert an individual from one religion to another is, to say the least, unnecessary. As a matter of fact to convert is morally wrong for two reasons. In the first place, he who attempts to convert is claiming finality for his creed and the claim is untenable and false. Secondly, conversion instead of leading one to any enduring truth only tends to disorganize and unsettle society and demoralize the converted individual by severing him from his cultural moorings. Let all religions live in amity. As for the Christian Faith, it has great inherent merits but let it reorientate itself to the great stream of the Hindu tradition with its tolerant spirit and within that tradition it can enjoy whatever freedom it desires. To put this plainly—let Christianity be Hinduized if it is to have a place in the life and culture of the nation! This is the attitude of the educated Hindu of today to the Christian Faith and he is sincere in his attitude and it arises in a definite philosophy. It is a philosophy of metaphysical monism and epistemological relativism.

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<sup>1</sup> Mahatma Gandhi in an article entitled 'Tolerance, i.e. Equality of Religions' included in a collection of his articles under the title 'Christian Missions'—Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad.



## The Hindu and Humanitarian Works

Let us now look at the attitude of such a philosophy to those works normally designated humanitarian. For a characteristically Hindu teaching in this connection we may turn to Swami Vivekananda. The Swamiji has a complete philosophy of works in his lectures on '*Karma-yoga*'.<sup>1</sup> We note the following relevant points:—

(1) It is the duty of every man to engage himself in the service of others. The Swamiji says, 'Yet we must do good; the desire to do good is the highest motive power we have, if we know all the time that it is a privilege to help others.'<sup>2</sup>

(2) The real motive and end of doing good to others is self-abnegation. In the familiar word 'self-abnegation' used by Swami Vivekananda, is hid his real philosophy of good works. He says, 'The main effect of works done for others is to purify ourselves. By means of the constant effort to do good to others we are trying to forget ourselves; this forgetfulness of self is the one great lesson we have to learn in life.'<sup>3</sup> A little later in the same paragraph he continues: 'The highest ideal is eternal and entire self-abnegation, where there is no "I" but all is "thou"; and whether he is conscious or unconscious of it, *Karma-yoga* leads man to that end. A religious preacher may become horrified at the idea of an Impersonal God; he may insist on a Personal God and wish to keep up his own identity and individuality, whatever he may mean by that. But his ideas of ethics, if they are really good, cannot but be based on the highest self-abnegation.'<sup>4</sup> The meaning here seems to be that service to others in the end helps one to realize the *Vedantic* ideal, the ideal being the annulment of individuality and the false notion of self-identity and the attainment of *Brahman*-consciousness—*Aham Brahma asmi*—I am *Brahman*. This becomes more obvious as we go through the later portions of his '*Karma-yoga*'. The Swamiji says that good works or deeds of mercy in truth help neither the world nor other people in any real sense; their only value is to help the individual who engages himself in them by eliminating eventually all sense of individuality. To quote him again: 'Our duty to others means helping others; doing good to the world. Why should we do good to the world? Apparently to help the world but really to help ourselves. We should always try to help the world, that should be the highest motive in us; but if we consider well, we find that the world does not require our help at all. This world was not made that you or I should come and help it. I once read a sermon in which was said: "All this beautiful world is very good, because it gives us time and opportunity to help others." Apparently this is a very beautiful sentiment, but is it not a blasphemy to say that the world needs our help? We cannot deny that there is much misery in it; to go out and help therefore, is the best thing we can do, although in the long run, we shall find that helping others is only helping ourselves. As a boy I had some white mice. They were

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<sup>1</sup> '*Karma-yoga*' by Swami Vivekananda: Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Almora, U.P.

<sup>2</sup> '*Karma-yoga*': Swami Vivekananda, page 76.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, page 89.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, page 90.



kept in a little box which had little wheels made for them, and when the mice tried to cross the wheels, the wheels turned and turned and the mice never got anywhere. So it is with the world and our helping it. The only help is that we get moral exercise.’<sup>1</sup>

(3) For the reason that eventually the value of altruistic motive and of help rendered to others is the elimination of the false sense of individuality and self-identity, the three *yogas*, namely, *Karma*, *Bhakti* and *Jnana*, are ultimately one. Vivekananda says, ‘Although a man has not studied a single system of philosophy, although he does not believe in any God and never has believed, although he has not prayed even once in his whole life, if the simple power of good actions has brought him to that state where he is ready to give up his life and all else for others, he has arrived at the same point to which the religious man will come through prayers and the philosopher through his knowledge; and so you may find that the philosopher, the worker and the devotee, all meet at one point, that one point being self-abnegation.’<sup>2</sup> ‘The worshipper, by keeping constantly before him the idea of God and surrounding good, comes to the same point and says “Thy will be done” and keeps nothing to himself. The philosopher with his knowledge sees that the *seeming self is a delusion and gives it up*; it is self-abnegation. So *Karma*, *Bhakti* and *Jnana* all meet here . . .’<sup>3</sup>

(4) In his last lecture on *Karma-yoga* the Swamiji says that freedom for the individual is gained only when the individual has succeeded in annihilating his individuality and personality. To quote him, ‘That little personality which he had before is now lost to him for ever; he has become infinite and the attainment of infinite expansion is indeed the goal of all religious, all moral and philosophical teachings. The person-alist when he hears the idea philosophically put gets frightened.’<sup>4</sup> As we have seen earlier, to the *Vedantin* Reality is one and impersonal and the highest spiritual aim of man is to realize that the notion of plurality is contrary to truth and that he being one always in his essence with this Reality should dispel those cob-webs of ignorance which in his empirical existence make him think he has a separate existence of his own. The recovery of ‘identity consciousness’ or ‘*Brahman*-consciousness’ is the *summum bonum* of his life. This can be gained by *Jnana* most surely but *Bhakti* and *Karma* also help in so far as they inculcate the habit of self-abnegation. As a matter of fact, the Swamiji goes to the extent of saying that to realize the freedom of self-abnegation there is no need to believe even in a God. He says, ‘The *Karma-yogi* need not believe in any doctrine whatever. He may not believe even in God, may not ask what his soul is, nor think of any metaphysical speculation. He has got his own special aim of realizing selflessness; and he has to work it out himself. Every moment of his life must be realization, because he has to solve by mere work, without the help of doctrine or theory, the very same problem to which the *Jnani* applies his reason and inspiration and the *Bhakta* his love.’<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ‘*Karma-yoga*’: Swami Vivekananda, pages 75 and 76.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, page 92.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, page 93. Italics ours.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, page 129.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, page 132.



## Conclusion

It is possible for a *Vedantin* of Swami Vivekananda's type to accept a complete separation, if necessary, of religion and deeds of mercy. So the Hindu in asking the Christian missionaries to engage themselves only in humanitarian work does not think that he is asking anything really difficult from them. We imagine he thinks that it is possible for a Christian missionary to be perfectly loyal to his call even when he is doing only deeds of mercy without talking to people of Him whose greatest deed of mercy, namely, the sacrifice of His life on the Cross for a sinful humanity is the motive and inspiration of all his humble deeds of mercy.

It is not possible in a magazine article to examine the validity of the position of the Hindu as outlined above. Such an examination in addition to involving a certain amount of technical discussion would take up far too much space. The motive in writing this article has been to show to our readers what the Indian Christian is up against. He has to contend not merely with irrational prejudices which are prepared to use political power to thwart the missionary activity of the Church. Such irrational prejudices are there. But if such alone is the estimate of our difficulties, we will be sorely disappointed. We may win our battle on the political front but will still be confronted with opposition and resistance. The Christian Faith confronts a religious philosophy which is the negation of many of its fundamental claims. We need in India in the future a new type of Christian apologetic—a Christian apologetic that will examine rival philosophies not by any criteria foreign to them but on their own merits, for we believe that *Vedanta's* weaknesses cannot be exposed by comparing it with the Christian Faith but by a critical examination of its own grounds and assumptions. We desperately need in the Indian Church today scholars who can undertake this work. And our theological colleges ought to give greater attention to this need of the present time.



The Christian consciousness cannot suffer anything which questions the uniqueness of Jesus. This feeling is well expressed by Dr. Denney, 'Christ has done something for us which gives Him His place forever as the only redeemer of men, and, no matter how thoroughly under His inspiration we are changed into His likeness, we never cease to be the redeemed nor invade His solitary place.' It is for this reason that we cannot be satisfied with the thought that the death of Jesus is merely one of many martyrdoms, and it is not in this way that the New Testament looks at it. Such expressions as 'He bore our sins' or 'He suffered for sins once, the just for the unjust' or 'He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world', all assume, says Dr. Denney, in the death of Jesus a relation to sin which has no parallel in martyrdom.—W. Fearon Halliday in *Reconciliation and Reality*, page 179.



# The Idea of the Secular State

T. K. THOMAS

The concept of the Secular State is the fruit of liberal thought. The concept had a profound influence on the evolution of political thought in the West during the last four centuries. In one sense the history of modern times is the history of the gradual secularization of political institutions.

## The Secular Concept

*Secular* is not a satisfactory term; its use is more convenient than correct. The word was originally used in the sense of belonging to the world of time as opposed to spiritual realities which are timeless. (It may be noted that in this sense the expression '*Secular State*' is a tautology, because by definition the State is secular, and secular is that which has to do with the State.) But there is a more circumscribed meaning of the word which is more relevant for us, according to which *secular* is that which is not bound by monastic rules. It is in its relation to religion that we must find its real meaning. *The secular is not opposed to monastic regulations, nor is it influenced by them; it is just not bound by them.* Monastic regulations may be taken to mean organized religious rules, and it follows that the Secular State seeks to be neutral in religious matters. The idea of the Secular State expresses neither an irreligious nor an anti-religious attitude. The Secular State recognizes the reality of religion, and it appreciates religious differences. But such appreciation is purely intellectual, and, therefore, impersonal. There is no participation, no taking sides. Thus a State that is secular should view religious forces and movements from the vantage ground of neutrality and objectivity, of detachment and impartiality.

Today, however, the term must command a wider connotation. In olden days narrow religious views sometimes rendered ineffective even ideals of natural justice. Race and language, to take only two examples, did not present many disturbing problems. But today such forces as race and language are equally strong. Religion has even been identified with race, and racial discrimination and religious intolerance often go together. And consequently social relations, both on the national and international levels, have entered a new dimension of complexity in our day. Hence the concept of secularism in politics to be of any lasting value in the context of modern life should comprehend all such forces.

## The State

The concept of the State involves three factors: a definite geographical territory, a people inhabiting it, and a government function-



ing among them, making laws, enforcing laws, and executing justice. The government is thus the means by which the State discharges its two-fold obligation, first as a guardian of the people, and secondly as a trustee of the territory. From this may be derived Prof. Laski's definition of the State as a society which is integrated by possessing a coercive authority legally supreme over the authority of any individual or group which is part of it. This supremacy of its authority is a fundamental concept. The State is sovereign. Such sovereignty today is identified with democratic sovereignty, and its effectiveness in internal and inter-State relations is assessed by the measure of its democracy.

The basis of the State is the consciousness of its citizens being a nation. It is this consciousness which makes for solidarity, and it is this that is at the root of the sovereignty of the State. And the usual ingredients of such nation-sense are religion, race and language, and the traditions born out of them.

Let us look at it another way. The State is there to guarantee and to protect the freedom of the individuals that comprise it. Its aims are liberty and protection, freedom and order, which, as is apparent, are conflicting aims. Hence the inescapable antagonism between the individual and the State. The success of the State depends upon a healthy reconciliation of its paradoxical functions, achieved through an intelligent ordering of governmental policies. To adopt Nietzsche's famous distinction, the State must guarantee both freedom from and freedom to, without producing any sense of strain in social life. It is only in the context of this inherent tension that we can rightly appreciate the relevance of the secular idea as applied to the State.

### The Theocratic State

In the ancient world all life was lived in the shadow of fatalistic notions. Religion, not consciously formulated as in modern times, but inevitably taken for granted, permeated all thought and life. The propitiation of the gods was an integral part of all social activity, and all governments were theocratic. There certainly were degrees of theocracy, but there was no government which was not, in some way or other, religious.

There was self-conscious theocracy, as in the Jewish State of the Old Testament times, where the religious character of the State was constitutionally accepted and proudly upheld. In China and Japan the emperors were also the high-priests of the national religions. In Persia and Egypt, in all seats of ancient civilizations including India, the general nature of the government was theocratic. The differences were only in details; the fundamental emphasis was more or less the same. Asoka was a tolerant king; but such tolerance in the ancient world was never based on any realization of secular ideals. Very often it was only a different theocratic emphasis.

It is often contended that Greek political culture was secular in character. This is only relatively true. The Hellenic outlook no doubt was rational and liberal-minded, but such 'modernism' of the city-states consisted in their comparative indifference to religious matters, not in any conscious secularistic outlook in politics. The worship of the Olympians, if not enforced as a duty, was recognized, in however vague



a manner, as an obligation, and they had the gods always up their sleeves to be produced on necessary occasions. They did it in the most dramatic manner when Socrates was being tried. One of the charges against him was this, that 'he was an evil-doer who corrupted the youth, and who did not believe in the gods the city believed in, but in other new divinities'. This certainly was not secularism. Nor was the slave system, which was accepted universally by the Greeks. One must, however, hasten to admit that when everything is said the Hellenic liberal conceptions in the ancient world came nearest to modern secular ideals in politics.

This was to some extent true with the Roman tradition too. In the Roman Empire there was a greater emphasis on the practical and institutional side of life. The poetry of Rome, as Shelley remarked, lived in its institutions. But the general tendency was towards an ill-defined theocracy, and an evil man like Caligula could appear in public with a golden beard and call himself Jupiter and get away with it.

A safe conclusion to be drawn from a study of these ancient States would be this: the greater the organized and centralized efficiency of the religion, the more rigid was the character of the theocracy. Because religion in Greece and Rome was largely a formality, and at its best a cultural inspiration, the less pronounced and the more liberal were their theocracies.

This is clearly illustrated in the theocracy of the Catholic world, i.e. Europe from the fifth to the fifteenth centuries A.D. The Catholic Church was the only organized power with any consciousness of historic relevance, and it found itself occupying the vacuum created by the fall of Imperial Rome. It accepted its new rôle with unquestioning confidence, and so commenced the theocratic imperialism of the Dark and the Middle Ages. Peacock's cynical assessment of the influence of Christianity, that darkness thickened with the progress of light, is to a large extent justified.

It was during this period that Augustine of Hippo laid it down that the State was only a part of the City of God, and that civil rulers must submit themselves to the judgment of the Church. Thomas Aquinas was even more emphatic. The goal of human activity was bliss eternal, and only the Church could lead man to it. Hence the Church was supreme. The Pope had been given all temporal and spiritual powers, and the king was only his delegate.

Prof. Rashdall quotes a medieval writer who claims that the Imperial State, the Catholic Church and the Scholastic Universities are the three 'mysterious powers or "virtues" by whose harmonious co-operation the life and health of Christendom are sustained'. That was after these forces attained a definite and tangible place in the scheme of life and in the structure of society. *What is important for us to note is that the structure of society was theocentric, that the State and the university had no independent existence.* But such a system could not continue. The intolerance of such a rigorous religious set-up, its inequality and its corruption, were fated inevitably to destroy the system. The fall of Catholic theocracy was a historic necessity. The great Italian poet Dante had voiced his protest as early as the thirteenth century A.D. There was John Wycliffe in England, and later came Martin Luther.



Subsequent history is to a great extent the history of the slow separation of the functions of the religious and the secular organizations. Our own day has witnessed the denouement of this particular historic plot, and Arnold Toynbee has christened (strange word to use!) our times as the Post-Christian Era!

It is useful to pause for a moment and realize that the religious State was not an unmitigated evil. Its primary object was not the preservation of vested interests through the exploitation of religious sympathies. It was the easiest and most natural way of achieving the necessary unity of outlook and national solidarity. Thus theocracy fulfilled a historic function. It enabled men, at least on one plane, to transcend the historic limitations of class and rank which obtained in particular periods. It formed strong cultural traditions, and, in general, enriched the pattern of history. If to introduce it today is an anachronism, that is because of the complex nature of the composition of modern society.

### **The Growth of the Ideal of the Secular State**

This may be briefly sketched. Broadly speaking, the secular tradition in politics has its origin in two main sources. On the level of concrete example, there has been the contribution of enlightened rulers and liberal-minded societies throughout the ages. The secular tradition of the Greek city-states is the most significant of such contributions to the common fund of history. Then on the level of the evolution of historic thought there was the influence of Christian ethics. Christian thought freed from an exclusively other-worldly outlook, and embracing as it did the totality of human life, made a very definite contribution to the secular concept. Even before human life achieved a new significance through the Incarnate Word, the Prophets of the Old Testament had begun to question the narrow theocentric nationalism of the Chosen People. Thus Amos had the boldness to declare 'Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto me, saith the Lord'. The Incarnation was the greatest affirmation of the significance of material values and social realities. (In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free.) It gave man a new insight into the nature of God, by shedding new light on his own situation.

But it was in the fifteenth century A.D. that the ideal of the Secular State emerged as a self-conscious tendency. We may trace its origins in the disruption of the Catholic theocracy of the Middle Ages. The Reformation emancipated the individual spiritually, and the Renaissance freed him intellectually. (Such generalizations are always misleading. It is one of the anomalies of human life that emancipation on one level invariably means enslavement on another. The disruption of Catholic theocracy also meant the destruction of the unity of Christendom. The only point we would make here is this: that in the emergence of the individual from the system in which he had been lost for centuries, we have the beginning of free thinking and of the ideal of the Secular State.) Human thinking was certainly revolutionized in these momentous centuries. Scholarship in the Middle Ages was often confined to trans-mundane speculation, and the theories of State expounded by scholars like Thomas Aquinas were substantially influenced by pre-suppositions which were unmistakably biassed. But now that man was

found to be significant in his own strength, we find a bolder approach to the whole science of State-life. Machiavelli is perhaps too extreme to be taken as a representative, but there is no doubt that the new approach was secular.

The Bloodless Revolution of England which destroyed monarchical absolutism, the American War of Independence which demolished the myth of imperialism and recognized the right of national freedom, and the French Revolution which marked the collapse of feudalism, a system into which theocracy had made deep inroads, are the more prominent milestones in the development of the secular concept in politics. It was only towards the closing years of the last century, however, that the concept of the Secular State emerged as a triumphant ideal, accepted in the Western world as the only possible approach to political life.

We have now briefly traced the history of the growth of the secular concept in politics. It was born when the tyranny of ill-understood religion was recognized as the biggest stumbling-block in the path of a groping humanity. The evil deeds of corrupt leaders of religion, inevitable results of organizational over-emphasis, manifested themselves in a blatant manner, and the whole religious set-up began to be questioned. Corruptions and compromises bred scepticism, and scepticism, in its turn, gave rise to the secular ideal. Such secular ideal was dangerously bordering on materialism; and it was redeemed by the very religion to which, on another plane, it represented a reaction. The spirit of healthy criticism inside religion, and a constant re-examination of the religious presuppositions by honest men who did not relinquish their religious convictions, saved this secular ideal from materialism.

### **A General Critique of the Secular Concept**

The dangers of the secular ideal are mostly self-evident. There are positive and negative dangers, dangers arising from reading too much and reading too little into it. It may be better to start with the negative dangers.

(1) The most obvious danger is that the concept may be inadequately defined, and therefore only partially practised. As it is a necessarily ill-defined idea there is always the possibility that its limits may be conveniently fixed by interested parties. Governments, in order to serve selfish ends, may exclude factors like race and language from its pale. Thus only the conscious adoption of a more comprehensive definition of the idea may correct the racial prejudices in South Africa, or even in America, and perhaps save India from a linguistic dictatorship. On a wider level the same applies to the world situation today. Only an enlightened appreciation of the meaning of the Secular State, defined comprehensively, can save ideologies and peoples from a suicidal narrowness of outlook.

(2) Then there is the peril of the concept lending itself to materialist and rationalist interpretations. In a secularist set-up, the whole question of morality may be seriously challenged. Morality in the secular climate cannot claim any objective validity, and thus loses its compelling relevance in the context of life. Listen to what Niebuhr says in his *Interpretation of Christian Ethics*: 'The distinctive contribution of religion to morality lies in its comprehension of the dimension of depth



in life. A secular moral act resolves the conflicts of interests and passion, revealed in any immediate situation, by whatever counsels a decent prudence may suggest, the most usual counsel being that of moderation "in nothing too much". A religious morality is constrained by its sense of a dimension of depth to trace every force with which it deals to some ultimate origin and to relate every purpose to some ultimate end. It is concerned not only with immediate values and disvalues, but with the problem of good and evil, not only with immediate objectives but with ultimate hopes. It is troubled by the question of the primal "whence" and the final "wherefore".

At this point it may not be out of place to underline, in however cursory a manner, the curious confusion in most systems of scepticism we have in the modern world. The cultured rationalist of our day is often curiously dogmatic, may even be said to be strangely religious, because the dogmatic truths he postulates in a state of blissful ignorance are fundamentally religious truths. When J. B. S. Haldane declared, 'It is no joke at all to be an atheist, because it means that you feel yourself responsible for the future of the world', he could have meant only a moral responsibility, for which there is no warrant in his own philosophy of scepticism. Such stealthy didacticism is characteristic of modern scepticism, and is much less scientific than acknowledged religious dogmatism which has at least the merit of being final and ultimate. One cannot believe in reason without assuming the objective validity and the lasting reasonableness of reason, and one cannot believe in man without assuming the belief-justifying nature of the human personality. The fact is that thorough-going scepticism, like thorough-going puritanism, is a negation of life, and life cannot afford to tolerate negations of itself. Neither suspension of belief nor suspension of disbelief can be sustained indefinitely and independently. At one point or another our mortal uncertainties will have of necessity to be explained and solved by relating them to religious certainties, and our mortal certainties clarified and re-emphasized by exposing them to the full light of religious certainties.

Thus the practice of a thorough-going secularism, entirely divorced from convictions which are not warranted by a secular reading of life and history, will have serious consequences. This, of course, begs the question; one only means the modern approximations which pretend to be that. It involves the whole question of ends and means with a devastating finality of choice. And the Secular State will be caught between the Scylla and Charybdis of totalitarianism and anarchy.

(3) Again, such all-out secularism will mean a glibly optimistic reading of human destiny. It takes on too much significance for itself, and makes the blasphemous claim that it is competent to redeem humanity on its own strength. The curious and unrealistic optimism, as well as the inherent challenge to ultimate moral principles, has origin in an unfortunate but natural enough confusion between secularism and materialism. They are entirely different view-points, and an emphasis on this difference should be considered fundamental. Materialism is a whole philosophy actively opposed to religion, and in whatever garb it is clothed, the denial of the objective affirmations of religion is its source and its most prominent characteristic. Secularism

in politics, on the other hand, is only a concept, which is not only not opposed to religion, but is the supreme affirmation of its own universality. *The secular concept which is non-religious in its working, is and must be deeply religious in its inspiration. And this paradoxical relationship between the secular idea and religion should be more consciously recognized if the Secular State and secular institutions in general are to be really and lastingly effective.*

(4) There is the danger here in India that the secular concept may be identified with the Indian tradition of tolerance. This is a far more subtle peril than any we have discussed so far. The Hindu tradition, it is constantly dinned into us, is a tradition of religious tolerance. There is no fanaticism in the Hindu attitude. All religions are good: they are different manifestations of the same universal reality, radii of the same circle, streams making their way to the same sea. Is it not most natural, most inevitable, to conclude that in India we have the right soil for the growth of the secular concept? Is not the secular idea essentially the same as the Hindu idea? *Is there any difference between a Hindu State and a Secular State?*

If this kind of argument does not betray simple confusion of thought, it betrays subtle intolerance of the most calculated variety. Tolerance of this kind can indeed be more tyrannous than intolerance. A system or an idea cannot afford to be tolerant for the simple reason that its uniqueness is the principle of its existence. One may be liberal in one's thinking, but one cannot be liberal with one's convictions because truth is more important than tolerance or liberalism. Tolerance on the humanist level makes for liberalism and secularism. On the level of Hindu religious thought it is merely a dogmatic tenet, and to claim any superiority for it, is sheer religious fanaticism. And in so far as it denies the uniqueness of other religious systems it is aggressively fanatic. There is a marked tendency in India today to equate such Hindu tolerance with the secular concept in politics, and it is one of the most serious problems that the Indian Secular State will have to face.

### The Indian Secular State—No Supporting Culture

We must recognize the fact that the Secular State has no supporting culture in India. It has been imported from the West, and to assert that 'Indian culture, civilization, life, thought and outlook in their essentials are quite favourable to the establishment of a tolerant secular democratic State'<sup>1</sup> is merely to indulge in the doubtful luxury of wishful thinking. The secular concept in politics certainly is not Hindu Revivalism.

Democratic emphasis in general may be said to have its roots in a consciousness of the independent significance of the individual. This consciousness in its turn is based on a philosophy of life which sees more in the individual person than is apparent to a superficial study. And where do we have such a consciousness? Not in a religion where the individual soul is destined to merge into a larger consciousness, losing its own independent existence. Nor, surely, in a view of life which considers man as a sparrow flying through the banquet hall of a king, flying in from utter darkness, flying out again into utter darkness, from

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<sup>1</sup> A Treatise on Secular State: J. S. Venkatraman.



oblivion to oblivion. The first represents Hindu thought on the religious level, the second Hindu thought on the popular level. For the Hindu, individuality is a burden to be borne, or an evil to be dissipated. How can a positive secular democratic emphasis receive any sympathy from such an outlook?

Again, democracy presupposes belief in the equality of man. How far is the principle accepted in Hindu thought or practised in Hindu life? We have only to think of the caste system and of the Hindu attitude to women to realize the undemocratic nature of the Hindu way of life. Caste, it may be noted, is no simple evil which may be rectified through a few simple modern prescriptions. It has its roots in the theory of *Karma*, which, in its turn, defines the individual's relation to reality. How can a Hindu abolish caste without giving up his traditional faith? In other words, how can a Hindu adapt himself to the demands of a Secular State without ceasing to be a Hindu?

### The Christian Roots and the Christian Reinforcement of Secularism

There is a great deal of truth in the belief that the emphasis of the Indian people has been other-worldly. They have tended to be world-renouncing rather than world-accepting. To state this as a fact, however, is not to praise it as a virtue. The denial of the world when one is in the world, the denial of life when one has to live it, savours of irresponsibility. The way of self-fulfilment is certainly the way of self-surrender, but self-surrender does not signify the obliteration of self; it is rather its sublimation. An other-worldly emphasis, in so far as it tends to deny the relevance of life, involves a denial of itself.

There are always two ways before us: the way of affirmation and the way of denial. The way of denial has been popularly recognized as the difficult way, involving suffering and self-sacrifice. A profoundly false valuation has christened it as the way of the cross. Affirmation, let us hasten to assert, can be more difficult than denial. Let us ask ourselves what it means to affirm the independent significance of our neighbour. Would we not reject his relevance, leave him behind or use him as 'it' rather than accept him as 'thou'?

It is in the Semitic religions that we first meet the affirmation of the individual's unique importance. In the Jewish concept, however, the individual has only a circumscribed importance; he was created in the image of God, but he has travelled far inland from the shores of glory, and there is only a distant hope of the pristine relationship. The Islamic notions of the individual's significance, as far as I can make out, remain on a fragmentary and undeveloped level. I say *fragmentary* because of the emphasis on the difference between the sexes, and I say *undeveloped* because the religious notions of the Muslim lead to a fanatic confusion of values where the affirmation and the denial get sadly mixed together.

It is in Christianity that we have the highest and the most comprehensive affirmation of the value of the individual person.

In Christianity, let us repeat; not in the Western way. The Western way, alas, is not the way of affirmation of life and the world; it is the way of their deification. It is the materialist way, and is not the world white with the bones of its victims? The betrayal of Christ by

so-called Christian civilization is the most tragic theme of modern history. Science, history, humanism—these are thy gods, O Israel! Religion is dismissed as the Utopia of the dreamer or the opium of the people. Life's end has become the pursuit of immediate pleasure or of a historical heaven. The attitude involves an even more fundamental denial than the way of the world-renouncing mystic; it accepts the primeval chaos and rejects the spirit of God that brooded over it. If the other-worldly denial of matter produced in the long run a lethargic indifference, the this-worldly deification of it has resulted in an aggressive attachment which defeats its own purpose. Consider for a moment the notorious crises of our day; crisis in the family, crisis in national and international relations, crisis in culture, crisis in every sphere of human life and activity!

Between the attachment to things and to persons which in effect becomes the apotheosis of things and persons, and the detachment from things and from persons which encourages irresponsible inaction, there is the Christian way of the critical acceptance of things and persons. Between the blind deification of matter and the almost nihilistic denial of its relevance, there is the way of its affirmation. And the Christian should appreciate the secular concept as the interpretation in one sphere of the Christian principle of affirmation.

Perhaps it is important at this stage to remind ourselves as Christians of the nature of our whole concern in the political sphere. For us the Secular State, or any earthly State, is not the first and the final concern. Our experience as 'sojourners', citizens of this world, should never be unrelated to our expectancy as Christians. The cities of this world are for us only a preparation and a foretaste of the City of God. 'A complete assimilation of politics to morality may never be possible for us, but again and again we shall be able to act so that some new form of organization may be the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual unity among men, some reconstitution of the cities of this world may be a sacramental means to a fuller entry into the City of God. We live today between the temporal constraints and the eternal truths, turning now to these and now to those. But there is a point at which the two meet and become one; it is the dwelling-place of God and, while it is always far beyond us, a step nearer to it is always within our power. The faith that life is one in God in spite of its divisions in us should at last enable us to overcome those divisions, and so to create at least the beginnings of a society in which the inner will be as the outer and the outer as the inner, in which all right human activity, by the very fact that it is obeying its own truest laws, will do the will of God.'<sup>1</sup>

It is in this spirit that the Indian Christian should enter into the social and political life of his country. He finds himself today in a position of peculiar opportunity; he has been freed from the traditional lethargy of the East, and he has not yet been completely corrupted by the materialism of the West. The Christian community can thus in a very real sense become the conscience of the nation. They truly constitute the 'creative minority'. What use will they make of this strategic position?

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<sup>1</sup> The Structure of Life: E. L. Allen.



# Christian Responsibility in Indian Society

R. W. SCOTT

The changing character of Indian society compels Christians to think about the nature of their responsibility in the social context that has developed since 1947. This is especially necessary as there is no historical parallel to the situation, nor is there any fund of Christian moral experience on which to draw. Much has to be done from the beginning, and this means from a Biblical understanding of our position until we work out to the actual situations in which we must decide what to do. Whatever the general attitude may be toward the government, the Christian has to form his relation to society as a whole in a way which will correspond to the faith which sustains and directs his life. This is possible as he studies continually the nature of his responsibility as a Christian to national society.

Responsibility is a two-way traffic. There is a relation that works both from the individual or the group out to the whole, and from the organized whole back to the units of which it is composed. This movement to be wholesome and free can never be allowed to deteriorate into a one-way traffic of mere demand, an insistence upon rights, or simply an expectation of what will be beneficial to the individual or group concerned. With all such movement there is a return in which the same individual or group accepts just demands upon itself in the interest of the people as a whole. Without this two-way traffic there can be no permanently free, just and ordered society. Either tyranny or anarchy will result.

## An Introduction

The State, as the organized form of national society, exists primarily to provide justice, order and the means of welfare of all its citizens. Its main concern must be to fulfil the requirements of justice in the sections of society which constitute it and give it authority. Since Christians make up one of the major sections of national society they are especially responsible for the healthy functioning of the State. That responsibility has a very special character in view of the nature of the Christian faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, and the life which flows from this faith. While the Christian recognizes a general responsible position as a citizen, he must also acknowledge that the rights and duties of citizens in general do not entirely define what he as a Christian citizen may be expected to do. Religious faith defines religious life in society. Not only does the Christian acknowledge a general accountability to the divine source of his life, as should every adherent of a living religion,

but he confesses quite openly that his place in national and community life is of a special kind due to his allegiance to Jesus Christ as Lord. It is what Jesus Christ is that tells him what he should be in every situation, and not just what he recognizes as the claims of a general human ethic upon him. While the State, then, must provide a just order of welfare for all its citizens, the Christian should help the State determine what that just order is, and what he will contribute to it. The expectation of Christian responsibility according to what he knows in Jesus Christ as Lord will not be satisfied with justice alone, but must go on to ask what it is that the love of Christ means for him in society.

Christian love in relation to society, as well as to the individual and within the life of the Christian Church, must be distinguished from a general human love which all recognize. This is not because Christians as such have any specially different kind of benevolence or concern for people as a whole, for as a matter of fact many non-Christians possess such benevolence and compassion to a far higher degree than many Christians. The love which we consider as Christian is not the love of man, but the love of Christ. This makes it a uniquely dynamic force wherever it is exerted. It is not simply the extension of human love, but the redemption of that love, broken and contradicted by human sin. There is a perversion of human love that confounds society as it does the individual also, who is subject to it. The love of Christ is the love of God at work among men, communicated by those who have come by faith into the way of the forgiveness of sins. 'In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.' (I John 4:9 ff.) Here the moral obligation is a part of the spiritual salvation from what impedes and distorts human love, giving it its true force and quality.

Christian responsibility has a particular concern for the nature of the love which supports and informs true justice, creating for it possibilities beyond any of its legal formulations. For any religion has some distinctive quality of life it inspires: a compassion, benevolence, harmlessness, kindness or good will which is essentially a part of its conception of life. So it will have its own form of responsibility in the life of society as a whole. While acknowledging the particular contributions which the different forms of religious life make in national society, the Christian must still look to the source of that love which he knows is given and found in Jesus Christ.

In thinking of the particular responsibility of the State for justice, it is necessary to make a distinction. We must discern the extent to which the claims of justice that are upon all citizens generally, and the claims of love according to the Gospel that are upon Christian citizens in particular, have a common area in social policy and action. Some will see the areas of justice and love as practically identical; others will find them to be divergent by the fact that such love as Jesus required can have no real fulfilment within any form of historical society. But in both cases it will be agreed there are common areas of action for the justice of the State and the love of the Christian person, and that it



must be our continual concern to work these out so that the two-way traffic of responsibility may be beneficial both to the State and to the Christian community. Obviously the Christian must hold the view that all people in the nation are responsible for seeking the ends of justice amid competing claims, while he expects the obedience of Christian love only from those who accept the Gospel. Christians must acknowledge an especially forceful claim upon them through the love of Christ. This is not a legal requirement, though Jesus did call it a command. Rather it is a personal claim which looks upon every human situation as having no complete precedent, and therefore no exact law or definition to guide in what should be done. Love in this sense is active, out-reaching, seeking for the welfare of others, and willing to sacrifice its own interests and rights for the good of others. This love will never be content with a legal statement of the maximum or minimum claims of justice, but will also seek to expand the boundaries of social need which come within the scope of the law. This can happen as some formerly undisclosed area of human need comes to light through Jesus Christ the Lord of life. Justice growing through love is given a clear historical purpose, and yet is saved from the idealistic peril of becoming utopian.

### **The Secular State**

The secularism of the Indian State means not only its religious neutrality but its exercise of justice in regard to the various claims upon it. We may say that in view of the religious plurality of Indian society the Secular State is the only really responsible form of government. This does not mean that the State is irreligious, although a Secular State can certainly become so. It merely means that the State does not commit itself to any one religious view, or to an anti-religious position. In the interest of the religious life of the people the secularization of the State must be limited to its functions of maintaining a just and pacific order; and, equally, it is in the interest of any religion within the State that the tendencies to a theocratic or communal order at all times be checked. In this social and political context the Christian must look on the State as a divine order of society with a purpose in history. The Apostle Paul called the non-Christian ruler 'the minister of God' and urged obedience to the demands of the State as a matter of Christian conscience (cf. Rom. 13). This is at least an illustration of the fact that there can be at the same time a secular and a religious form or view of the State. From the Christian point of view a distinction must be made between the God-given nature and purpose of the State and its secular functions in the religious and social pluralism of Indian life. This has a very practical bearing upon the present concern of the governments in some of the States for the conduct and welfare of religious institutions, and how far the law can go in attempting to regulate the affairs of these institutions to make them contribute to a healthy social morality. Christians have here a theological task to give guidance in the practical issue. While recognizing the functions of the Secular State in maintaining public order and morality, a Christian view will also maintain Christian institutions accountable to God in such a way as to make them not only honest in their management but loving in their social purposes.

The various groups, sections, communities and classes of Indian society, which seek to gain recognition for their respective demands upon the government, give a special complexity to the problem of justice in concrete affairs. For one thing, it is important that the secular character of the State be maintained if justice is to be secured among these sometimes competing claims. It may be best here to think of securing justice in terms of equality. The equality that is in mind when national leaders refer to a classless society has to mean an equal access to the resources of the nation and an equal opportunity for security and development by means of them. This kind of justice requires a continual inner development of the functions of government so as to provide the opportunity deserved by one group or another, but it never should be thought of as a static balance in which some kind of mathematical equality is to be achieved. The secular conception of the State is just such a progressive functioning of society as will provide those opportunities that are the just expectation of individuals and groups. But it cannot be expected that this is automatically assured by a democratic form of government, although in such government there is the best ground for assurance. The State itself has to be responsive to the needs of its people or it will be overcome by inner tensions.

There are two particular threats to a functional equality in the Secular State for which Christians ought to have a special concern. The first is communalism. It is possible for a religious group so to assert itself that it determines in its own interest not only concrete decisions of the State, but the nature and form of the State itself, making it conform to some restricted communal purpose. In this event a communal government would take the place of the secular one. The rights of a religious or social group are not to be measured by the number of its adherents, or its representation in the legislature, but by its need for development to a place of responsible contribution to national life. For this reason the Christian community has to support the secular character of the State, because it best assures the rights of minorities, including Christians themselves, and because it offers the greatest means for Christian love to work in society. As against communalism the Secular State is essential to the operation of a dynamic justice increasingly moulding all sections of the nation into a working community which considers the needs of all, including the under-privileged, as of equal and impartial importance.

The real nature of communalism is sometimes disguised by attempts to show concern for social justice apart from special religious aims. In resisting attempts to establish a religious form of the State, e.g. 'Hindudom', Christians have also to ask in what way they can work for Christian purposes to take form in national life, or how the State can be expected to be responsive to special Christian claims upon it. In what sense, then, can we pray and hope for Christ's lordship in the nation? How can Christians work to see that His lordship is made known to all? These are questions that have to be answered in a way that will avoid suspicion of proselytism and communalism among us, and yet will leave us faithful to the Lord who sends us to be witnesses of Him to all men. We may not expect to have a Christian State, but we must look toward gaining recognition of those forms of political



organization and action that will be compatible with the concrete expression in society of the faith in Christ as Lord of men.

The other particular threat to the functional equality which the Secular State should secure for its people is from the side of communism. If communalism seeks to disturb justice by reducing the chances of a balance of interests among social and religious groups, communism in another way disturbs justice by making an excessive emphasis upon the necessity of equality in society. When communism attempts to achieve an equalitarian society it does this by denying the only possible form of equality among living men, for it eliminates what it considers to be intractable elements, either by increasing the accumulation of political prisoners or by liquidating them. What communism attempts for its ideal of freedom, ends in a totalitarianism which not only represses the tensions within society but destroys the freedom within the minds and spirits of men. The result is a new form of tension that widens its national and international areas, and deepens man's distrust of himself. Communism would destroy the secularism of the State by enforcing a total encroachment upon all life according to its own faith and interpretation. This would result in a monster State that could allow no free opposition and no adverse opinion as to its legitimate rights.

The Secular State is subject to its own peculiar evils, when those in power exercise it for their individual or class advantage, making democracy a mockery. The answer to these evils is to be found in the constant vigilance and activity of all groups which must exhibit in themselves the moral standards they expect in public life. The religious contribution comes from an awareness of the divine function of the State as ordained of God, and therefore subject to those judgments of God which become evident in any society. A prophetic religion seeks to make it responsive to the purpose of God by a continual enlightenment. That enlightenment can have a Christian source only through those who know that the function of the State is not indestructible, and that its actions are not beyond the power of a love that works in freedom.

### **Christian Activity**

Christian educational and social institutions, in contributing significantly to the growth of modern democracy, have helped to make possible the establishment of the Secular State. This contribution is now diminishing in quantity for two reasons. One is the increase in number of other than Christian institutions which have more recently been established, thus decreasing the ratio of those in national life who are influenced by Christian teaching and example through institutions. The other reason is that the government is more and more assuming control of the means of education and the social services, either by complete management or by claiming a greater influence in their internal affairs. Christian institutions ought therefore to consider how they can more dynamically influence the mind of the nation in order to continue their distinctive contribution. This means that the numerical ratio of decrease has to be offset by a qualitative increase in responsible service. The secular functions of the State will have to be maintained in this process if Christian service is actively to be continued. Yet it is possible for the State, in continuing its concern for the management of public institutions,

to destroy the freedom which has been one of their most valuable contributions to the nation as well as to the Christian community. In resisting the depreciation of this institutional freedom, therefore, Christians can make a contribution to the nation, but they must place limits on their own religious liberty so as not to encroach upon that of non-Christians who seek the benefits of their service.

The Christian community contributes to the nation, not only through its service, but when it is worshipping God and propagating the Gospel. The worship of the Church expresses man's love of God, and at the same time inspires his love of neighbour. One way of showing this love of others is by proclaiming that Christ loves all men, individually and without distinction. While the right to propagate religion is written into the Constitution this does not relieve Christians, who have a special interest in the provision, from the necessity of constant vigilance that their activities do not become degraded into proselytism. We ought always to insist upon the Christian understanding of conversion as the free right of the individual to change from one religious faith to another. An exact legal definition of conversion will never be satisfactory, but it will be open to the State to take action against proselytizing activities wherever they may be found. The responsible Christian should not make it necessary for the State to adopt a legal course of action, but should himself seek for such an expression of the love of Christ as will avoid the necessity. It belongs to the Church as one of its most important contributions to society to see that the insistence upon the right of propagation of religious faith does not disguise a proselytizing motive. The Church should instruct and guide its members in ways and attitudes of evangelism which will convey to all sincerely interested persons the essentially spiritual purpose of this activity. This can only be done as the Church itself is possessed by the love of Christ so that its regard for people will not be counted numerically, but by selfless service.

### **Nationalism and the Church**

Before 1947 nationalism provided the stimulus for the revival of religion and culture, and in turn adopted their forms of expression. It was engaged in the struggle for freedom both from foreign political and economic control, and from the dominating influence upon India's cultural life by the West. The attainment of the first freedom has opened the way for an added concentration upon the second. The national spirit seeks for a conquest of alien cultural institutions that seem out of harmony with some of the revived values of ancient thought and life. Since Hinduism and Buddhism are inextricably related to these values in both their social and religious forms, these historic religions occupy a new position of importance for the nation. This is not simply due to the situation within India. For the force of nationalism, that until 1947 was directed to the internal struggle for freedom, has now turned to the international sphere where the dominating question is India's relation to the world power struggle. The success of the policy of neutrality has given strength to the cultural revival as a force in international affairs, where reference to India's spiritual heritage has a special appeal. The changing form of nationalism has therefore a particular bearing upon



the Church in India in its ecumenical character, and in its responsibility for national, religious and cultural development.

The Buddhist and Hindu revivals show that Christianity is not alone as a missionary religion in India. One of the influences of the Christian missionary movement has been to help in the awakening of men and women to a new social awareness, and this was particularly effective because of the decadence of these other religions. By becoming a vehicle of nationalism, Hinduism regained much that had been lost, as when Gandhiji launched his Harijan reform movement. Now the new nationalism shows that the social reformation is not the last frontier of Hindu revival, since the values of ancient religion take on a new significance for the world today. The re-appearance of Buddhism in India in a nationalist guise gives added impetus to the cultural revival which indirectly, at least, may offset some of the Christian impact upon the nation. It is apparent both from the Biblical and traditional character of Christianity as a missionary religion that its social contribution is in direct ratio to its missionary effectiveness. A static and introverted Church cannot become a constructive force in national affairs, rather it may itself become a prey to the aggressiveness of non-Christian religions. One of the urgent tasks before the Church in India is to reach an understanding of the religious position, and to come to grips with the resurgence of non-Christian religions. To do so in a constructive way will mean to accept the challenge, not in a spirit of conflict, but by a new evaluation of its own heritage in the light of its present national position, and through a fresh realization of that spiritual power of the Holy Spirit that witnesses in historical situations through obedient men and women.

The Church in India is placed under a peculiar tension, because of the growing challenge of the non-Christian revival, and because of its relationship with Churches in other lands that continue their missionary obligation in India. While partnership is the ideal, in actuality we must still reckon with large-scale dependence upon missionary finance and personnel. The relationship in itself is not unwholesome, rather it embodies a vital Christian principle. But we have to contend with the fact that the indigenous expression of Christian thought and life, which has been desired for so long, has made little advance since political independence. A certain kind of imitative expression is not wholesome, although often the emphasis of the proponents of indigenous Christianity, as well as of the critics, has fastened on it. True indigeneity is a natural process of the Church living in its environment by the power of the Spirit. If the Church is to make its contribution to the nation as a living institution it must find its life in obedience to the Spirit within the community of Christ. Here freedom and dependence are found, and the Holy Spirit is revealed as the source of responsible witness in action.

# The Rule of Law

B. F. PRICE

The word 'Law' has come to have at least two distinct meanings in modern times. It may be used with reference to human conduct, so that we speak of someone 'breaking the law' when he disobeys a rule which is imposed by some higher authority. It is usual in this connection to speak of 'laws' when the regulations are imposed by the State, and of 'rules' when they are made by some lesser authority, such as a society or an institution. Growing out of this first sense of the word is another, belonging to the realm of science and philosophy. So we speak of the law of gravitation, the laws of motion, Mendel's law, and so forth. These can all be gathered together under the expression 'laws of nature'. But these laws are really principles deduced from particular facts. We can sum up such laws by saying: 'Assuming that such and such conditions are present, then this will be the result.' We may sometimes be misled by the kind of language which is used in speaking about these laws, as when we are told that some natural object 'obeys' a certain law of nature. We must remember that 'obedience' is here a metaphor taken from the realm of human conduct. We can 'obey' or 'disobey' a command because we are responsible human beings, but water cannot strictly be said to 'obey' a law when it freezes at 0°C. The fact that it does so is independent of any 'law' formulated by scientists, since that law is simply a generalized statement without which scientific study would be impossible. The laws of nature do not in themselves cause or produce events—they simply analyze the pattern in accordance with which events take place. Now, this use of the expression 'law of nature' has grown out of an earlier use of the same phrase which goes back to Roman times, according to which 'Nature' has implanted in the human mind the knowledge of right conduct. When we use the term 'laws of nature' with reference to scientific formulae, we are inheriting this usage from seventeenth-century scientists who looked upon these 'laws' as commands which were imposed on material objects by God, so that, for example, Robert Boyle says, 'The wisdom of God does confine the creatures to the established Laws of Nature'.

But to return to the ancient pre-scientific conception of the Law of Nature. This was understood as the universal principle of justice underlying all the various imperfect human embodiments of justice in society. Thus we meet with the prohibition of murder or of stealing in ancient and modern codes of law from all parts of the world, together with the exaltation of the ideals of kindness and courage. Two hundred years ago, a distinguished English lawyer described the Law of Nature as 'binding over all the globe in all countries and at all times: no human laws are of any validity, if contrary to this'. What, then, is the source of this law?



## The Classical Thinkers

The classic discussion of the nature and source of justice is to be found in Plato's *Republic*. In this dialogue the friends of Socrates make various suggestions regarding the nature of justice. One claims that it is 'to restore to each man what is his due', but this definition is found to be unsatisfactory, since it may involve calling the injury of others 'justice'. Another friend then claims that justice is 'the interest of the stronger', so that each government makes laws to suit its own interests, and having done so, calls the result justice. This is, in fact, the position taken by Marx when he claims that law and morality in any age or society are nothing but the reflection of the local and contemporary economic outlook at any time and place, and of the ensuing struggle for power. Similarly, Lenin describes normal notions of morality as 'a deception, a swindle, a befogging of the minds of the workers and peasants in the interests of the landlords and capitalists'. Marx and other Communists are hardly consistent, since they have frequently acted upon a higher view than that which underlies these theories. Such purely materialistic conceptions of human behaviour as they claim to hold leave no room for any altruistic or egalitarian motives, and are inconsistent with a show of righteous indignation on behalf of the exploited masses. Granted this view of justice and morality, the only reasonable motive for conduct is pure self-interest. But to return to the *Republic*. Socrates convinces his companions that a ruler, in so far as he is a ruler, is concerned with the interests of the State, not of himself, just as a doctor, in his capacity of doctor, is concerned with the healing of the patient, and not with his fee. But a third friend makes the claim that so-called justice arose in society as a compromise between the advantages of imposing injustice on others and the disadvantage of suffering injustice at their hands. The modern parallel is the theory of the seventeenth-century philosopher Thomas Hobbes, who pictured the natural state of society as anarchy, from which escape has only become possible by the artificial construction, by agreement, of the State, which is henceforth supreme over the individual. Law is therefore simply identical with the will of the ruler. Socrates and his friends finally reach the conclusion that justice is the power which enables communities and individuals to live in inner harmony, doing that for which each element is fitted. Some centuries later, Cicero defines law in Stoic terms as 'right Reason, congruent with Nature, universally diffused, constant and eternal, which summons to duty by commanding and restrains from wrong by forbidding'.

In taking over this conception of the Law of Nature, the Christian Church from an early stage drew a distinction between the absolute or eternal, and the relative, Law. That is to say, God's original design for human conduct was one in which no coercion is necessary, since spontaneous love would rule in all hearts, with no social distinctions of ruler and subject, master and servant. In contrast to this absolute Law of Nature, we know only a relative law, adapted to man in his present fallen state. For, in human life as we know it, there are indeed social distinctions, there is an unequal distribution of property, and in postulating the identity of the Law of Nature with that given by God to His people through Moses, the early Christians recognized that that law

entered a fallen world, so that it was already a compromise between the perfect purpose of God and practical human systems of law.

### **The New Testament Conception**

Does the New Testament throw any light on this conception of a Law of Nature, or is it simply a pagan belief absorbed by the Christians of a later age? Paul speaks rather like a Stoic in Romans 2:14, 15, when he places on the same level the Gentile who obeys the Law of Nature and the Jew who obeys the Law of Moses. Paul, who before he became a Christian was certainly a Jew, not a Stoic, no doubt recognized that the book of Genesis spoke of an earlier commandment given by God than that which was issued through Moses. For the ninth chapter of that book represents God as making a covenant with Noah as the representative of the survivors of the human race after the Flood. It is here that the principle of exacting a life for a life is established. Paul no doubt believed that this principle in human society, not confined to Israel, arose from a direct command of God to the common ancestor of Jews and Gentiles. The first chapter of John's Gospel expresses the idea that the Word of God, which became flesh in Jesus Christ, was the true light that enlightens every man, irrespective of race. The writer no doubt identifies the Word of God with His Wisdom, which was regarded by the Jews as God's agent in creation, and which in turn was identified with the Law (see Deut. 4:5, 6). The word which is translated 'Law' in the Old Testament originally had no connection with the Stoic conception of an underlying natural principle upon which human legal systems were based. On the contrary, the word might equally well be translated as 'revelation', for through it God's purpose is revealed, and each individual is responsible before God for obeying His command. This is strongly brought out in the form of the commandments which God imposes on His people. The Law is not expressed as the will of society, but of the God who is supreme over society; and in the Ten Commandments and certain other ancient laws in the Old Testament, the words 'Thou shalt' emphasize the direct responsibility, not simply of the community, but of the individual, to live in obedience to God, in 'civil' or 'secular' as well as religious affairs.

### **The Law and the Gospel**

This leads us to ask the further question: 'What is the relation between the Law and the Gospel?' In other words, does the Christian still have to concern himself with the Law now that the Gospel has introduced a new relationship between God and man, by which the Old Testament is superseded? This is a question to which Christians have not always paid sufficient attention, but it has an important bearing on the problem of the Christian's attitude to politics, and of the function of the State in the purpose of God. The sixteenth-century Reformers lived in a world in which practical answers had to be given to these questions, and they distinguished three 'uses' of Law, or causes for which God revealed His Law to men, and if we examine these, we shall see that they give us a clear insight into the relation of the Law to the Gospel.



The first of these 'uses' they called 'Political', that is to say, God provided His Law in order to preserve the world in such a state of order that human existence, despite man's disobedience, might still be tolerable. Without this system of rewards and punishments, human society would become chaotic, since we are taking an unrealistic and hence an un-Christian view of human nature if we suppose that human society can function smoothly without any outwardly imposed restraints. This is by no means an Old Testament conception which is superseded by the New, as we may see from such passages as Romans 13:1-7; I Timothy 1:8-10; 2:1-4; I Peter 2:13, 14. These New Testament writers were, as often as not, stating these principles at a time when the State was hostile to Christianity and was under the authority of an absolute ruler. If in these circumstances the apostles refused to advocate detachment from the world, how much greater is our responsibility to exercise our political duties in a democratic State in which Christians are free to influence public affairs? This carries with it the responsibility of Christians to protest against such tyrannous action of the State as would set aside the fundamentals of God's Law for human society as they are expressed, for example, in the Ten Commandments. We must always remember that there is a limit to what the State can rightfully demand, since, when there is a conflict between two loyalties, 'we must obey God rather than men'.

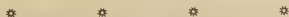
The second of the three 'uses' of the Law is called 'Paedagogic' from the Greek word which is used by Paul in Galatians 3: 24, 25, translated into English as 'schoolmaster' or 'tutor'. But these translations are liable to mislead us. The point is not that the Law is a preparatory process, educating us that we may be fit for the higher stage of the Gospel, but rather, as the context of Paul's letter shows, that the constant presence of the Law is a reminder to us of our *lack* of freedom in our natural state. For the paedagogue was the slave who was responsible for the discipline of the schoolboy in the world in which Paul lived, never letting him out of his sight to do as he liked. It was the very fact that the Jews had so exalted and exacting a moral code in their Law that made it so difficult for the morally sensitive among them to avoid falling into despair. Paul shows us in the seventh chapter of Romans how the Law brought home to him his condemnation in the sight of God. He was a Pharisee, and as such, as strict an adherent of the Law as any Jew could be, but that adherence only brought despair, as he realized how far short of God's standards he had fallen. What, then, when we hear Jesus demanding of each of us a righteousness *exceeding* that of the Pharisees? (Matthew 5:20.) The Sermon on the Mount, far from being a Gospel of grace in contrast to the Law's demands in the Old Testament, is an even stricter interpretation than any that went before it, of the moral requirements of God. It is the final statement of the Law, the supreme exposure of all our human pretensions to righteousness. So far from providing salvation on easy terms, the Sermon on the Mount drives us to the conviction of our helplessness, and makes us recognize our need for repentance and for God's grace. A modern writer vividly describes this aspect of the work of Christ by saying 'He Himself lances the abscess of self-righteousness'. But

without the Law, with its demand that we do our best to obey and please God, that abscess would not become ripe for the Surgeon's lancet.

The third of the 'uses' of the Law of which the Reformers spoke is that which is called 'Didactic'. That is to say, Christ has already fulfilled the Law for us, that Law which not only condemned Him to death (John 19:7), but also laid Him under its curse (Galatians 3:13), and in so doing He has freed us from bondage to the Law. But although we are no longer slaves of the Law, we have been released in order to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit by His grace. This third use is called 'didactic' or 'teaching' because its function is to guide the life of believers. And we certainly need that guidance, however far advanced we may be in the Christian life. The Bible assures us that we cannot in this life claim to be sinless (1 John 1:8). We are not freed by Jesus Christ from living in accordance with the will or Law of God, but from seeking to set ourselves right with God in proportion to our success in obeying Him. We are set right with God through His grace, and not through anything we may do, but that leads us on to the 'good works which God afore prepared that we should walk in them'.



The men who think they can find the fullest inspiration for leading the good life quite apart from those sanctions of philosophy which have to do with the ultimate nature of reality, or those assertions of the Christian religion which give final glory to the life of man by seeing it in God, and through God, and subject to God's personal invasion of human life are really asserting that you can grow the tree of human life without any roots in the nature of things. The truth is, the higher the tree grows, the greater the danger, if it is not deeply rooted.—L. H. Hough in *The Christian Criticism of Life*, page 220.



People who think meanly or diffidently of themselves are simply those who cannot get away from themselves. They hesitate to express an opinion, not because they are humble, but because they are afraid they may not be able to sustain it. They do not respond to a call because they are afraid they may not be able to do themselves justice. They want to be liked and they fear to be blamed. In fact, they are thinking of themselves all the time. Such people are not truly humble; they are vain with a vanity that is very susceptible to being touched on the raw. The truly humble is a man of a quite different sort. He is one who can make his influence felt for righteousness and truth because he is thinking of righteousness and truth and not of himself.—F. C. Bryan in *Concerning the Way*, page 87.



# Book Reviews

Books reviewed below are available at the Y.M.C.A. Publishing House,  
5 Russell Street, Calcutta 16.

*Gospel and Law.* (C.U.P. 10s. 6d.)

For those who are familiar with Dr. C. H. Dodd's 'The Gospel and the Law of Christ' (William Ainslie Memorial Lecture, June 1946), the publication of his Bampton Lectures, entitled 'Gospel and Law', will satisfy their desire for an elaboration or development of the earlier theme. That it is accomplished in only 83 pages should not disappoint us, for many a longer treatise has cost much more and contained much less learned and stimulating material.

Let me try to review very briefly the substance of the argument in his treatment of the subject. In the first chapter, entitled 'Preaching and Teaching in the Early Church', Dodd indicates that along with the primitive proclamation of the Gospel there was a primitive Christian code of conduct. As he expresses it, 'The order of approach, first the proclamation, then the beginning of instruction in morals, first *kerygma*, then *didaché*, seems to have been thoroughly characteristic of the Christian mission; it is precisely this order . . . which we have seen to be general in the New Testament writings.' He substantiates this theme by considering, first, how the commandment of the Torah must be set in the context of the mighty acts of God revealed unto His chosen people, which same acts established a 'covenant' between God and the people of Israel; and the later distinction which can be made between *haggada* and *halakha*, which is analogous to the primitive Christian distinction. Then, taking his evidence from the New Testament Epistles, he considers the evidence for a definite form of ethical instruction in the earliest days of the Christian mission.

In the second chapter, entitled 'Principles and Motives of Christian Ethics in the New Testament', he suggests four features which the Christian ethic did not share with contemporary ethical programmes or theories. These are Christian eschatology, the idea of the 'Body of Christ', the imitation of Christ, and lastly, the true nature of Love. Before I pass on, it is helpful to find Dodd emphasizing the dangers in translation concerning the New Testament usage of *agapé*. To replace 'charity' by 'love' doesn't solve the matter! One of the great tasks of preaching is to help our people to brush aside the sentimental associations they gather around this word by proclaiming Love incarnate. So we are reminded that 'the governing concept of Christian ethics, love or charity, cannot be understood except out of the Gospel'.

His third chapter is entitled 'The Ethical Teaching of the Gospels', where he examines the importance attached to the tradition of the sayings of Our Lord in the Church's ethical teaching. In this, Dodd

considers the obvious difficulty that these sayings appear to be on a different level compared with the ethical precepts of the Epistles. In other words, the precepts in, say, Romans seem straightforward general rules of conduct, but can you say the same thing about the Gospel precepts? Not in the sense that they could not be applied; but that they might not be considered suitable for general application as a plain guide to conduct, that is, taken literally. He considers that they must be put in their right setting, that is, in the context of the teaching of Jesus as a whole. Then he finds, as T. W. Manson expressed it, 'a stress on the parabolic concreteness of the ethical precepts of our Lord, their urgency, and the fact that they are a guide not only to right conduct but also to repentance'. This question of urgency seems to me to be particularly important, and is it surprising that the great emphasis on decision should be so evident in the Sermon on the Mount for example, when we remember the words of our Lord at the beginning of His ministry (Mark 1:15)? Certainly decision and repentance must follow in man's encounter with, and acceptance of, Christ. Considering that this is the real function of Christ's precepts, he further concludes that 'they become not only the standards by which our conduct is judged, but guideposts on the way we must travel in seeking the true ends of our being under the Kingdom of God'.

Finally in the last chapter, 'The Law of Christ', he considers how far the ethical precepts of Jesus are intended to constitute a law, bearing in mind the arrangement of the ethical sayings of Jesus by Matthew (Sermon on the Mount) which suggested a parallel with the promulgation of the law from Mt. Sinai, when the new law, the law of the Kingdom of God, superseded the law of the Old Testament. He cannot accept the attitude which repudiates at all costs any understanding of Christianity as a new law, or that there is no law for the Christian except his own 'inner light'. Any true understanding of the idea of the 'covenant' implies not only that God has done something for men, but also obligations which must be carried out. So with the new covenant in mind, he founds his essential thesis on the Johannine texts (Jn. 3: 16; 13: 15, 34). The first tells us not only what God did, 'but also what is the *quality* of His act and what is its *direction* or purpose'. And the second, 'Love one another, as I have loved you', states the basic obligation of the new covenant. So it is 'an obligation to reproduce in human action the quality and the direction of the act of God by which we are saved'.

Dodd concludes by putting a very vital question before us; namely, is the law of Christ (thus conceived) meant only for members of the Church, those consciously committed to His allegiance, or has it a general application to human relations at large? When he argues that 'the law of the new covenant, which is correlative with the act of God in Christ . . . is the law of our creation—the God of our redemption is the same as the God of creation'; he believes that its application is as wide as the creation itself, and the Church is bound to pronounce moral judgments in the name of Our Lord in the world beyond its immediate membership. But it is quite another question when we consider how the law of Christ must be carried out in the lives of men. The point is that the ethical precepts of Jesus have a very definite reference to the



life of every man in this world ; and His life and teaching constitute an essential judgment upon man : but they cannot be fully regulative of, or fully realized in, the life of man except in acceptance and dedication to His will and purpose.

This is certainly a book which doesn't come our way every day, and I am sure many will enjoy reading it.

*The Image of God in Man.* (S.C.M. 18s.)

'There is no more fundamental debate in the world today than that about the nature of man.' So Prof. Cairns introduces his examination of the Christian doctrine of man, which, in his particular treatment, carries the story from the early attack by Gnosticism in the second century to the modern movements of racialism and communism. There is surely general agreement that he has chosen a subject which is worthy of considerable thought and study. I have no hesitation in recommending this book ; for not only is it a remarkably comprehensive treatment of the subject in 250 pages, but it is an effective preparation for the Christian Apologetic in our own day. I said just now that it was a remarkably comprehensive treatment of the subject. Considering the limits placed on his treatment—for the material is largely the substance of his Kerr Lectures in Glasgow—it does give a good review of the history of the subject of the image of God in man. In this review he gives a short account of its Old and New Testament sources. Then he considers the contribution of the early Church theologians including St. Irenaeus, St. Clement of Alexandria, St. Athanasius and St. Augustine, not actually in succession, but relating their contributions to certain special questions they faced and different aspects of the doctrine of man. He hopes to achieve some continuity in his method, and to prepare the ground for the contributions of later theologians. After the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas, he develops the main part of his study as an examination of the reformed teaching according to Luther and Calvin, and, coming to our own times, in Barth and Brunner. Before his final chapter, summing up his own conclusions on the subject, he gives a short account of modern concepts of man, namely, the Marxian and Freudian, which the Christian writer must answer in our own time. I think his selection in this review has been wise and helpful, and especially in bringing to our notice a good deal of material which, in the German, has not been translated. Students and ministers in India who read the *Scottish Journal of Theology* will already have some idea of the development of Barth's thought in the latest of his published volumes of Dogmatics. In this connection Prof. Cairns does us a service in bringing things up-to-date by his frequent quotations and summary of some of Barth's teaching in two books which complete the third volume of his Dogmatics. (In this connection readers may wish to refer to *Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol. 2, No. 1, March 1949, where Rev. W. A. Whitehouse gives a very full review and commentary on the second book of the third volume of Barth's Dogmatics.)

It is obvious that Prof. Cairns has a good deal more sympathy with the views of his old teacher, Prof. Brunner, than Prof. K. Barth. And he also draws attention to the change in Barth's views from the early thirties, and the way in which the two great theologians have now a

good deal of common ground between them, apart from their many decisive differences. Yet he does attempt to deal fairly with Prof. Barth's views in criticism, and has no hesitation in recognizing Barth's work to be of the highest order.

So far I have mentioned his review of the history of the doctrine, and his useful summary of the relevant work of Barth and Brunner on this subject. And while there may be criticism of his criticism in respect of these writers, yet more attention will be drawn to his own conclusions. In this respect an important part of his study is to define the universal human image in its relation to God, and in his conclusion he accepts a good deal of Brunner's argument. He accepts the term 'formal' image, yet prefers to call it the Old Testament image. And this, to use his own words, for 'man is in the universal image of God because he stands in an inescapable relation of responsibility to God and man . . . his responsibility does not change, though the form of his response may change to an almost infinite extent'. He goes on further to argue that the Christian doctrine of man demands a general revelation, and criticizes Barth for his confusion of general revelation with a valid natural theology. Thus, with Brunner, he concludes that the existence of a general revelation, or revelation in creation, does not imply a belief in the existence of a valid natural theology. Then he considers the transition from the Old Testament image to the N.T. image, formulating it according to man's nature as endowment in response. These then seem to be some of his main conclusions, although it is a pity that he found himself unable to make his own contribution to the vital question of whether a point of contact exists in the natural man for the preaching of the Gospel.

Finally, he makes a grand plea for the essential dignity of man in God's sight, with suitable qualification of the term used. And this has added importance in view of his brief discussion of the Marxian concept of man. He gives a summary treatment of the views of C. S. Lewis and Prof. Kümmel on their particular views of human dignity to give strong expression to his own position. He feels that the Christian Church must proclaim the essential sacredness and worth of man in the sight of God in the face of the inhuman doctrine of man expressed in the thought and action of totalitarianism. Recalling the saying of Muretus ('Dost thou call that soul vile for which Christ was content to die?'), he stresses the command of our Lord that we love one another, and that our love must embrace all His children everywhere.

### *Schism in the Early Church.* (S.C.M. 21s.)

Professor Greenslade, in a very useful introduction to his book, indicates the plan and scope of his work. This makes it easy for the reviewer whose first task is generally to indicate the contents of the book under review. Prof. Greenslade has not been able to suffer the implication often made that the early Church was undivided. Any careful reading of Church history could hardly arrive at such a conclusion; yet he is careful to point out a relative truth in such statements if the schisms were accepted as being really outside the Church. So in the first chapter he considers the kind of questions that the early Church asked; such as, whether the schismatic body was within or without the Church, or



the difference between heresy and schism. And he is at pains to emphasize how seriously the early Church regarded any breach of unity, and how in its teaching schisms were regarded as outside the Church proper. In the next five chapters he goes on to discuss some of the principal causes of schism, distinguishing those which could be called ecclesiastical—liturgical disputes and problems of discipline, and those which were essentially secular—personal rivalry, nationalism and social and economic influences, and the rivalry of the leading churches (the so-called non-theological factors in Church disunity). In the next three chapters he considers how the early Church tried to deal with the problem of schisms; first, from Constantine's reign, by coercion, that is, calling upon the State to suppress or penalize the schismatics. Secondly, by negotiation and discipline, that is, dispensing with law and custom in the greater interests of the restoration of unity. Thirdly, theological changes introduced to meet the pressure of schism. Finally, Prof. Greenslade ends with his own conclusions regarding the consequences of schism in a general summary of the movements he has described. And he includes a most valuable 'personal statement of faith' on the problem of Church Union which may be more valuable than many 'worked-out arguments'! There is a most valuable appendix on the schismatical movements and bibliography to interest most students of the subject.

The synopsis of schisms (appendix 1) was introduced for a definite purpose. He indicates in the preface or introduction that he changed his mind on the actual treatment of the subject when he wrote his lectures. Instead of taking each major schism separately, he decided to consider the principal causes of schism and their treatment. For those who listened to the lectures I could imagine they appreciated the difficulty, and their own deficiencies! Now that the lectures are published, it will be a more rewarding study. Not only with the synopsis mentioned above, but with the necessary references available, they will be better equipped for the task. From this point of view the method becomes, as Prof. Greenslade hoped, 'more interesting and more fruitful'. It is, therefore, a book which needs to be re-read, and, if that is true, it surely counts as a good recommendation.

Prof. Greenslade speaks of the object of this work as twofold. He has an academic interest in finding out just what happened—what schisms are and how they arose; and on the basis of this work, trying to relate the experience of the early Church to the situation of the Church today. This aims at making a necessary preparation for a good deal of discussion that is going on just now on the question of Church Union. For that reason I was tempted to read the last chapter first, and found it a thrilling and courageous 'personal statement of faith'. It is extremely healthy and helpful, and I would like many to read it. So a few words on what may be the most important chapter:

The question that he puts forward at the end of his book is, 'Should we still take as our point of departure the conception which ruled, almost without challenge, in the early centuries of Christianity, that the Church is a single visible communion, and that all schisms are outside it, or should we now believe that the one Church is inwardly divided by schisms?' In attempting to answer this question he says that 'we

must face the facts of divided Christendom and evolve a theology of disunity' in the sense that the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church exists, on earth, in its divisions, comprising a number of communions which unequally manifest and live by various elements in full Christianity. Thus we might expect him to discuss the question how shall the validity and efficacy of the ministry and sacraments of these communions be judged? Or where shall we draw the line in acknowledging acceptable churches, ministries or sacraments?

His starting point is that as soon as we acknowledge efficacious ministries and sacraments in other communions, then we acknowledge them as, in some real sense, 'churches' within the one Church. And further, to quote him in full, 'If we find a denomination so far sound in faith that it preaches the Gospel on the basis of the Bible and affirms the Apostles' and the Nicene creeds, if we find that it uses the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion and that it solemnly sets apart men to be ordained by Christ, through the prayers of the Church there represented, as its ministers, and if we find that this denomination, so far as we can judge, has produced the fruits of the Spirit and shown its power to survive, then we ought to assume that Christ has given it a ministry endowed with His own authority and we ought to acknowledge it to be within the *Una Sancta*.' Thus he makes the plea for intercommunion, even though there may be (as there will be) important differences between the denominations.

Then he tries to envisage such agreements which will make intercommunion possible, and believes most strongly that this type of approach will help to relieve any tensions of hostility that may exist and prepare the way to a growing together which in God's gift may lead to union. While he is thankful for the measure of reunion brought about in the Church of South India, he feels that in the West corporate unity will only succeed a greater measure of this growing together. With that I wholeheartedly agree; and I agree that intercommunion is a vital part or step in such a process of growing together. While the situation in India is admittedly very different and a strong case has been put forward for a more rapid transition, yet I feel it to be true that even here a deeper understanding of our different communions, doctrinally and theologically, is absolutely necessary. There may be good reasons for settling things quickly; but surely there would be real value in the gradual preparation of growing together as Prof. Greenslade envisages in his book. Perhaps then we might have a deeper understanding (and here I am thinking on the congregational level) of our own distinctive contributions, as of other denominations that we join in deeper fellowship. 'We ought to be in communion with one another; the case against it is not good enough. Is not God calling us to have the courage and faith and humility to take THIS step?' We pray this may come soon.

W. S. REID



# Important Editorial Notices

With this number *The Indian Journal of Theology* completes two years of its existence. We hope that our subscribers feel that the Journal is justifying itself. Of course we know that there is room for a great deal of improvement and we are endeavouring in this direction. We want more subscribers and we will be grateful if our present subscribers can help us in this matter.

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Those who have not paid their subscription for 1953 are requested to do so as soon as possible.

The subscriptions for 1953 end with this number and we hope that our present subscribers will renew their subscriptions for 1954. Please send your subscription by Money Order if possible, for that will save you and us additional expense in the way of bank or V.P.P. charges. Those who send their subscriptions by a cheque on a bank outside Calcutta are requested not to forget to add bank commission. Subscriptions must be sent to the Editor by designation and not by name.

\* \* \* \*

There are some changes on the Editorial Staff and Council. There are two bodies now to assist the Editors, a smaller one called the Editorial Board which can meet as often as desired and give help and advice to the Editors and a larger one which may not meet often but whose counsel will nevertheless be available to the Editors. We are grateful to all who assisted the Editors during the past two years and we welcome new members on the Editorial Board and the Advisory Council.

\* \* \* \*

We take this opportunity to express our gratitude to Mr. Harold Ehrensperger who was till recently the Managing Editor of the Journal. He has returned to his native land, the United States, and therefore had to give up the office he so efficiently held. His advice and help have been most valuable, especially at the initial stages, and he gave of his time most generously and ungrudgingly during the last two years. The Editor is greatly indebted to him.

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We welcome the Rev. William Stewart, a missionary of the Church of Scotland with the United Church of Northern India as the Associate

Editor. Mr. Stewart is joining the Staff of Serampore College as Professor of Theology. With his long and mature experience as an evangelistic missionary in Madhya Pradesh and his new place in a theological college, he will be an asset to the Journal.

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The Editor begs to inform the readers of the Journal that he will be away from the country for about fifteen months. He will, however, continue to be editorially responsible for the Journal, though a great deal of the burden of work connected with the Journal will fall on the Associate Editor. *Subscribers are requested not to address any correspondence by name to the Editors.* If letters are addressed by designation they will be attended to more promptly.

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The Editors welcome articles from people interested in the Journal, more especially from those in India. It is desirable that articles sent should be typewritten with double-spacing between lines. The Editors reserve the right to accept or reject articles offered to them and to edit accepted articles according to their judgment. As far as possible articles offered should bear an Indian accent, for therein lies our contribution to the theology of the Church Universal.



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